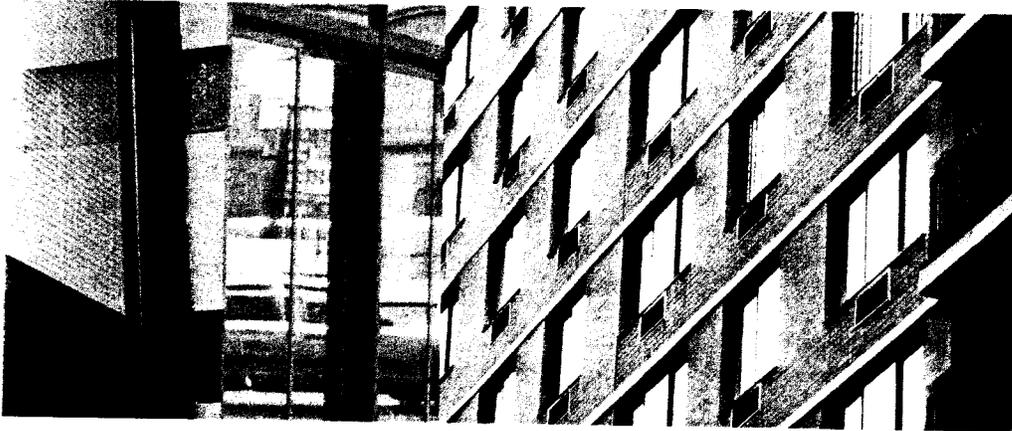




NEW YORK CITY WRITING PROJECT



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A NOTE FROM THE Editors

Yes, we have a new look! It may take a moment to adjust to the sleeker appearance, but once you do, we hope you will like what you see and, of course, still be interested in what you read. For a while now, the editorial staff has been experimenting with the visual style of the newsletter. Perhaps you've noticed our playing with fonts and layouts over the last year. (We've even discussed the possibility of photographs.) In this, our latest issue, we take a major leap from the look with which we've all grown so familiar. You'll notice that our focus has shifted. This particular issue has fewer articles about teacher practice or educational issues. We've chosen, instead, to provide you with a quick overall picture of what's been going on around the Project as well as some of the accomplishments of Project members throughout the city.

Our plan is to publish three newsletters a year. We will publish two issues like this one: concise and informational. Not to worry, though. We're still retaining many of our popular columns: Steal These Ideas, Listserv Conversations, and Project Notes. In response to suggestions from our readers, we hope to incorporate poetry and student writing in future issues. Because we know that you've enjoyed the more extensive and thought-provoking articles written by our colleagues, we will continue to include a few of these in each issue. However, we also intend to publish a third issue similar to a journal. In this special issue, we will compile several longer articles. This is our plan at the moment, and we will see what happens.

In this issue, we include a piece that poses the question, "Why do I teach?" Who among us hasn't asked that question? Whether you're a new teacher or a veteran, chances are you've asked this of yourself at least once. But if you're like Blair McGinnis, (and we suspect more than a few of you are), you've probably asked yourself

a host of other questions related to your career choice. In this lighthearted and funny look at a typical day as a teacher, Blair shares the questions that plague her on a daily basis.

Another question many of us ask is, "How can I get my students to read?" Encouraging reluctant readers to connect with a text is a daunting task, one that is often

compounded when the text is removed from the student's reality. In Listserv Conversations, we chronicle a discussion in which several teachers grappled with encouraging their students to read *The Giver* and *1984*.

Last year was a year unlike any other we have ever known. It began with the horrific events of September 11th, events that undoubtedly changed our lives and the lives of our students forever. It most certainly had a huge impact on the mood in our schools and the work that went on in our classrooms. We thought it only fitting that, in this issue we look back at what was on our minds immediately following the tragedy. Benita Black has assembled some of the online comments posted on our listserv to help us remember what a group of New York City teachers thought, felt and suggested to each other at that terrible moment.

Finally, we wish to welcome Joe Bellacero to the newsletter staff. A long-time Project member, teacher-consultant, and active listserv participant, Joe is now sharing his many talents and insights with us. We also want to thank Maggy Timmons-Knoessel for her years of service as an editor. Maggy's warm and helpful nature made her a valued colleague.

In closing, we trust everyone has had a restful and delightful summer. We hope that, as we return to work in the fall, life in the city and in our schools will be more settled and we will all feel ready and supported to do the important work of teaching.

WRITING PROJECT

The New York City Writing Project (NYCWP)

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS

NATIONAL COUNCIL of TEACHERS OF ENGLISH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

November 21–26, 2002

Atlanta, Georgia

NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT ANNUAL MEETING

November 21–26, 2002

Atlanta, Georgia

NEW YORK CITY WRITING PROJECT ADMINISTRATORS' BREAKFAST

December, 2002

Lehman College/CUNY

NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT URBAN SITES NETWORK CONFERENCE

May, 2003

NEW YORK CITY WRITING PROJECT ANNUAL TEACHER-TO-TEACHER CONFERENCE

Spring, 2003

Lehman College/CUNY

NEW YORK CITY WRITING PROJECT 9TH ANNUAL CELEBRATORY READING

Spring, 2003

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QUESTIONS

on an

ORDINARY DAY

Blair McGinnis Lafayette High School

Whether you have been teaching for a year or two or are a veteran, you can probably relate to this funny/serious piece by Blair McGinnis. Blair just completed her first year at Lafayette H.S. in Brooklyn, where she taught Global Studies in English and Mandarin Chinese. Before that, she received a Master's degree from Columbia University in East Asian Regional Studies. Initially trained in International Studies, Blair left a career at Morgan Stanley in debt capital markets for the glamorous life of a social studies teacher. Despite, or perhaps because of, her ordinary days filled with questions, she reports being very happy with her decision to become a teacher.

What will they be like today? I ask myself this same question every morning. Then comes the question of what to wear -- nothing too tight, nothing too bright -- something conservative and comfortable.

Do I even know what I'm talking about today? I cannot remember learning about the French Revolution myself. How am I supposed to teach it? Such anxieties never end in this new world of teaching in which I suddenly find myself floundering. Within two days of being hired, before the school year even started, my life changed completely. Now, two months later, I still find every day full of new challenges, rewards, and surprises. Most of all, the days are full of questions—theirs and mine.

I'm not the one talking! What if I only write like two sentences for the homework, do I still get credit? If I come to class, can I still pass? If I fail this test, can I still pass? If I do the project and pass the tests, can I still pass? I studied so hard for this exam, does this grade mean that I failed your class? How could I have studied and still failed the test? I like the way she dresses. She's not pretty, but she's not ugly. She has nice eyes. I like her. She's a good teacher. I hate this class. I hate history. I hate getting into groups. I don't want to sit there the sun is too bright. I don't want to sit on the dumb side of the room. Can I sit in the front? Can I sit in the back? Can I put my head down? Can I go to the nurse? I need to go to the bathroom, I got my period. I have to take a shit. Why don't you have our test grades? You had all weekend to grade them! Why does she get to wear a hat and I can't? Where's Prussia? What does significant mean? I forget what famine means? How was your weekend? You look nice today. Where are you going for Thanksgiving? Are you cooking? How old are you? She's probably eighteen. Are you married? Are you Jewish? She's Jewish. You know her father is rich. Her father is rich, but she probably said that she wants to make it on her own. We're your favorite class, aren't we? Please don't call home, I'm not getting along with my mother. See this red mark on my face, this is because you called my house. Did your pass get stolen? Someone stole her pass. We don't know who stole your pass, why should we be punished with a pop quiz? You're just yelling at me because I'm black. Why don't you yell at the girls? Why'd you put my name on the board? I'm telling my mother! Why'd you fail me? I don't talk like those guys do! Why didn't you call on me? And she's the one who went to college! He put gum on my paper. She hit me. He threw paper at me. She's saying stuff about my mother. He hit me. He stole my pen. He broke my pen. Do you have a pen? Do you have a pencil sharpener? Do you have a piece of paper? My pen exploded, can I go to the bathroom? I sat in ink. I sat in gum. My finger's bleeding. I can't breathe, I have asthma. It smells in here. Can we take a newspaper? What time is it? When does this class end? Why aren't you ever sick? Why is she yelling at us? This is a lockdown, why can't we go anywhere? You're not fair!

Why did she use pen on the scantron, when I handed out pencils to everyone? Why is he sucking his thumb? Why is she humming? Where did my energy go? If he keeps nodding off, I'm going to fall asleep too. Why can't I remember how to say this in Chinese? How do I make them shut up? Why won't they stay in assigned seats? Why was she

in the bathroom for so long? Why are they late every single day? Why did he just start showing up now? What has he been doing? Why do they keep hitting each other? Why are they so loud all of the time? Why hasn't she ever said anything? Why won't he just work in the group? I'm never going to make it without peeing my pants. Can I make it to

the bathroom and class on time? Why is everyone out of control? I still can't believe she's pregnant. They're going to be happy when they get their tests back. They're going to hate me when they get their tests back. I just completely forgot what I was talking about. Is my fly down? I wish it weren't so hot in here. Are they laughing at me? Do I have chalk on me? Am I boring them? Why are they sleeping? Maybe if I talk louder it'll motivate them. Are they totally confused? Wow, they actually seem to be getting it. I just explained this. How do they not know this answer? Did I pronounce this wrong in Chinese? Is that why they're laughing? Why do they keep talking right in front of me? Are they cheating? Is that a note being passed around? Should I take it? Why have I received only three homework assignments from this class? Who should I call on? Why aren't they paying attention? Wow, everyone is listening to me, I hope I don't mess up. How do I choose who should answer? It sure is quiet today. I can't believe I brought the wrong tests with me. I can't believe I forgot pencils for the test. I can't believe I just passed out the wrong handouts to the whole class. I can't believe I just passed out the same handout twice in a row. Why is he wearing pony-tails? I wish he would just know to come in without wearing the do-rag. So far, I've been lucky by not having to actually say "do-rag." How do I get someone that tall to listen to me? Why is he just looking out of the window right now? Why is he banging his fists on the desk incessantly? Why won't she stop singing? I can't believe he thought he could play video games in here. I can't believe he just swore while answering a question. When are they just going to get it?

As I lock the door of my apartment, I wonder what's in store for today. At least I have all of my lesson plans done. Will I be able to get to the Xerox machine as soon as I arrive? Will the line to use it be too long for me to wait? While I make my way toward the subway station, I think about the value of what I am doing. Am I on the road to success? What is the definition of a successful teacher anyway? Do you realize it suddenly one day when everyone shows up, and on time, having done their homework, ready to participate, without calling out or chatting or laughing or making jokes or yelling or complaining all period? Or is it when you make a breakthrough with just one student? Is it when you no longer get embarrassed for one reason or another? Is it when you can get by through the whole period without a lesson plan? Is it when you know the answer to every question asked, without hesitation? Is it when you no longer rely on a mentor for almost everything? Is it when you not only stop forgetting things, but also find that remembering them becomes second nature? Is it when you no longer feel like collapsing at 4pm? I decide that my questions may never be answered, or at least not in the near future. However, I do start to realize the value that Aristotle saw in asking many questions. After all, questions are what I do...every ordinary day.

LISTSERV CONVERSATIONS

Who among us hasn't felt the frustration of wanting to share a great work of literature with our students, who, for one reason or another, won't connect with the text? When a teacher signed on to the listserv this past fall to seek out some ideas for a unit she was planning on Orwell's 1984, she served as a catalyst for a lively conversation about the struggle many of us face getting students to read, particularly works of science fiction. What follows are several excerpts from that conversation during which many teachers voiced their concerns, frustrations, and solutions for dealing with students who don't read.

Mary Carroll, Adjunct Lecturer,

English Department, Lehman College: I can't get my students to read. They just don't do it, so I've been very limited as to what I can accomplish. I've been showing them the film "Pleasantville" along with the reading, or rather non-reading, of *The Giver*. I'm witnessing a strange phenomenon. They don't have any relationship with fantasy or sci-fi. The only story I've read with them that I think they "got" was Jamaica Kincaid's, "Girl." I suspect that is so because the young women could relate to the harsh mother's admonitions. I thought *The Giver* would be too easy for them, but they don't understand fantasy.

Grace Raffaele,

Institute for Collaborative Education: I, too, am surprised when kids do not "get" the thrill of imagining a future or another reality. You remind me that one of my goals as a 6th grade teacher is to introduce the use of the imagination and to invite kids to tap into their own as often as possible or feasible. My 8th graders might have the same reaction as your kids, I'm afraid. I wonder if short stories are the introduction into this genre that might pave the way in slower but more inviting steps. Maybe have them read Isaac Asimov's, "The Fun They Had," before, rather than after, *The Giver*.

Nigel Pugh, Assistant Principal of English,

Robert F. Kennedy Community High School: I have a reading group of "emerging readers," 9th and 10th graders who failed the 8th grade reading test. They're great kids; they just don't read. They like being read to, and they quite like it when I give them quiet reading time so that they can read by themselves without other distractions. They also like the post-reading discussions, but if I send them off into the world with instructions to read at home, they will not. Maybe we have to go back to basics with kids who don't have a habit of reading.

Ed Osterman, NYCWP Associate Director: I have found, for quite a while now, that many high school students seem to resist reading fantasy or anything that does not smack of reality. Perhaps that is why

they resisted the works you mentioned. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that they liked Kincaid's "Girl." Perhaps it was because it felt real and familiar to them. The voice was someone they knew, the ideas and experiences were things they could relate to. Maybe the answer is to go with authors with whom students can make such a connection.

Mary Carroll: It certainly seems to be the case that reality "bites" better than fantasy. I still wonder if there is a lack of imagination at the core of not being able to read books so far afield from kids' own worlds, especially since both film and television, which they watch ad nauseum, are filled with alternatively lived lives in strange places.

Kate Moss, CUNY Writing Fellow,

Lehman College: I'd love to see students writing a piece of sci-fi, fantasy, utopian or dystopian piece of fiction. I know this sounds like a big project, but it wouldn't have to be. What if after they read something of this nature, maybe just a short story or chapter, they had to write something of their own? If one problem is the distance students perceive between their lives and the texts, maybe making their own pieces will close that gap. Why not sci-fi in Motts Point, a utopian futuristic piece set in East Harlem, or a fantasy piece set in Jamaica, Queens?

Peggy Maslow, Franklin K. Lane High School:

I think there are students who will try books offered to them and have their own inner motivation. Then there are students who need to be motivated and that's where my job begins. I was hoping that *1984* would have been an easy book to motivate students to read, but it turns out I was wrong. Slowly I am winning over students with all sorts of coaxing about the book. We read sections in class, and they reflect on what we have read. They share their reflections on a discussion forum. That's helped convince a few more students to try the book. I wished I had picked a more popular book, but at the same time I am getting them to read a book they ordinarily wouldn't have read on their own. Is there something to be said for that? I think *1984* is still a worthwhile book for students. Or is it?

AWARDS AND PUBLICATIONS

David Johnson, a long-time Project member who teaches history at Martin Van Buren HS in Queens, is the recipient of the 2002 John Bunzel Memorial Award, Association of Teachers of Social Studies, United Federation of Teachers and Social Studies Supervisors Association of New York City. Congratulations to David "for demonstrating the highest degree of scholarship, pedagogical skills and professionalism in the social studies." David also presented at the 42nd Greater Metropolitan New York Social Studies Conference, held at the Brooklyn Marriott Hotel this past winter.

Teacher-Consultant **Sally McMahon** of Fort Hamilton HS in Brooklyn is the recipient of the Jonathan Levin Urban Educator Fellowship Award. The fellowship will provide Sally with full tuition as she enters NYU for her Masters. Great news, Sally!

Let's have a round of applause for **Melanie Hammer**, NYCWP teacher-consultant and Co-Director of the Long Island Writing Project, who received the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. She also was recently promoted to associate professor!

Did anyone read the article "High School Confidential" in the May 7th issue of the *Village Voice*? **Stephen Haff**, Bushwick HS English teacher, participated for several years in the Project's inservice seminars, working closely with on-site teacher-consultant **Nick D'Alessandro**. Stephen started an extracurricular theatre program at Bushwick, which has now blossomed into Real People Theater. The students have performed at theatres around the city as well as at Bennington College and Fordham University. Stephen's dedication and inspiration have transformed the lives of these students, and we applaud their success!

Congratulations to **Carmen Kynard** of Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn on the publication of her chapter, "New Life in this Dormant Creature: Notes on Social Consciousness, Language and Learning in a College Classroom." Carmen's chapter appears in a new book, *Alternative Discourses in the Academy*, published by Heinemann.

Eythan Klamka, an English teacher participating in our inservice seminar at Canarsie HS in Brooklyn, reports great news. His student, **Derrick Bowers**, won a \$5000 second prize award for his poetry entry in the 2002 Bertelsmann's World of Expression contest. Both Eythan and Derrick read their work at our 8th annual celebratory reading in June.

Elizabeth Bommarito, an English teacher participating in our inservice seminar at Lafayette HS, was recommended by Assistant Principal **Sharon Henry** for the Educator of Excellence Award given by the New York State English Council, NYSEC, 2002.

LOOKING BACK ON 9/11

Looking over the listserv entries posted on the days immediately following September 11th, it is apparent that we were trying to process immediately what has actually taken us (and the world) many months to absorb. In fact, we are still, at the close of this most difficult school year, trying to grapple with the issues, which were imposed on us as a result of the attacks on our city.

Our first thoughts and concerns as professionals were, as always: What Do We Do For Our Kids? This time, that question had more import and urgency than any of us—even those who have been around since the grim days of November, 1963—could begin to imagine. Most poignantly, it is clear from our dialogue, we needed care-giving as much as our students did; we needed to find our way so that we could serve them humanely and competently.

We did our best. We got through—no, better than that—we rose to and beyond the challenge. Here, now, in June, we look back at a sample of what was on our minds on September 12 and 13, 2001.

Dusty Miller: I know neither what I want nor need, but I feel draped by the same sense of sadness that surrounds so many of us... These are painful days. It's important for us to express as well, if that's what's needed.

Mary Carroll: I woke up knowing that I would bring in two pieces of music (which are on my syllabus for the Humanities course anyway, though I wasn't planning to do them yet) —Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* and "Blowin' In The Wind."

Paul Allison: With these 8th and 10th graders, they just needed a safe structure within which to pour their horror, sadness, rage, sorrow, confusion... and I think they learned more by seeing these emotions in me, but

Julie Conason: We want to watch out for grief of such magnitude that it might be better handled by counselors in the building. We also want to watch for highly nationalistic or prejudicial responses... If students respond in such a way, it is a time when you can share your values too, as a strong voice in the classroom community.

Barbara Martz: While the Board of Ed. creates lessons, each teacher needs to do what is appropriate for his/her class, and how can you know that completely until you find out what's on their minds?

Elaine Avidon: Maybe I don't need to say this because you will do this regardless: That there be room for silence. That we not fill the void with words and writing and lessons and shape. To be in the void together. Letting the silence be there.

STEAL these IDEAS

Grace Raffaele of the Institute for Collaborative Education began the school year with a unit exploring identity. "The Boy Without a Flag" by Abraham Rodriguez, Jr., a story about the son of a Puerto Rican immigrant who refuses to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance, was to be an important part of the unit. She was worried, however, that the kids, in the wake of the events of 9/11, would rush to agree that "conscientious objection" was warranted without equally "conscientious consideration." She wanted her students to explore and question a topic that had become so familiar that it was taken for granted: the Pledge of Allegiance. She created the following writing activities to explore the issue further with her students.

First, in a double-entry format, she wrote the words to the Pledge down the left side of a page - mostly in phrases and, in some cases, single words alone on a line (e.g. allegiance, indivisible). The students were to use the right side of the page to paraphrase each word or phrase. They then picked out key words that they thought were important to the meaning of the Pledge and key words that they felt were a "problem." After a brief history of how and when the Pledge was written, she asked her students to answer the following questions: "Do you think school children should be required to recite the Pledge of Allegiance? Why or why not?"

Next, students were asked to think about the opposite view to their own and explain in writing why someone might disagree with them. After sharing their responses with a partner, the class was asked to imagine that they were part of a new Congress that was rewriting the Pledge. Their goal was to write one that most citizens would feel comfortable reciting and that would survive over time, without mention of specific historical or political views. The students needed to decide on the purpose of their pledge, determine three important points or concepts or key words that should be included, write the first draft, read it to someone else and get one suggestion written down. For homework, they rewrote their pledges.

The next day, they came in with their pledges and were put into groups to share their work. They needed to discuss and agree upon the purpose of their new group pledge, write a pledge together that incorporated something from everyone in the group and list three times or occasions at which they thought the new pledge should be recited. Individually, for homework, they were to write a letter to the principal explaining what they'd done, why and how they would like it used in the school.

The activity went extremely well. Grace enjoyed hearing the kids argue about the meanings and connotations of some of the words rather than "pledge bash" or yell at each other for being or not being patriotic which was a refreshing shift in the tone of the class. Soon after this, she conducted the same activity during the school's staff meeting as part of a shared practice session. She was able to engage the teachers in a timely activity (the Board of Education had just been quoted as requesting all schools recite the Pledge), offer this as a suggestion for a topical advisory activity, and model some engaging writing activities.

When **Julie Merker** taught at the High School of Telecommunications, she created a research project to help her students understand the various immigrations/migrations of 19th century America. She made up "portraits" of a variety of people who would have been involved in the movements. To such skeletal descriptions as "a Japanese immigrant who arrived in Washington State," "a formerly enslaved person who migrated to Kansas," "a mail-order bride," and a "buffalo cowboy," the students were told to add the flesh. The task was to create a life for the person that the student was holding in front of him/her. There were no limits as to how far the life could range or in what format the life could be presented, but the events and details of the life had to be historically accurate. The class discussed various formats for presentation: diary, obituary, epistles, traditional research paper, etc.

In all, Julie created eleven portraits and handed them out at random to her 33 students, who were permitted to trade people if they so chose, and to do their research together or separately. The school librarian was notified and placed appropriate texts on reserve. The class spent three days in the library. First, the librarian showed them how she would research such a person, then the students were given two days to work on their own with librarian and teacher there as resources.

On the day the projects were due, the students held up their presentations for all to see and then presented their people with an attachment to them that truly brought the history alive. Julie says, "It was half *Spoon River*, half *History Channel*."

PROJECT NOTES

The New York City Writing Project seeks to improve urban education by providing teachers and administrators with development services that focus on writing and learning. As one of the leading urban sites of the National Writing Project, the NYCWP also promotes the importance of teacher knowledge, expertise, and leadership. Though the tragedy of 9/11 delayed the start of many school activities, we moved ahead and involved ourselves in both local and national activities. We worked in 40 schools in 10 Community School Districts and High School Superintendencies throughout New York City. Our on-site teacher-consultants and coordinators provided services to over 500 K-12 public school teachers who serve about 25,000 students.

2001-02 Inservice Seminars

Our inservice program was as lively and varied as in the past, with both experienced and new coordinators working together to serve their colleagues. We wish to acknowledge and thank the following teams of NYCWP teacher-consultants and coordinators who supported teachers at all levels in every borough.

Alternative High Schools:

On-site Teacher-Consultant: Barbara Martz
EBC (East New York), Street Academy,
Legacy School of Integrated Studies, Cascades
Co-Coordinator: Tyler Schmidt, NYCWP

On-site Teacher-Consultant: Tyler Schmidt
Urban Peace Academy, Public School Rep,
Bronx Technology, New School for Arts and Sciences
Co-Coordinator: Cher Sansone, Monroe Academy
for Business and Law,
Jeremy Kaplan, East Side Community HS

BASIS:

On-site Teacher-Consultant: Lucie Harris
Robert F. Wagner HS
Co-Coordinator: Maria Fisher, Brooklyn
College Academy

On-site Teacher-Consultant: Debi Freeman
Lafayette HS
Co-Coordinator: Sally MacMahon, Fort Hamilton HS

Bronx:

On-site Teacher-Consultant: Joe Bellacero
Evander Childs HS
Co-Coordinator: Marianne Rose, Evander Childs HS

On-site Teacher-Consultant: Ed Osterman
Morris High School Campus
Co-Coordinator: Sonja Johnson, Gompers HS
Patsy Wooters, Bronx School for Law,
Government and Justice

On-site Teacher-Consultant: Linda Garcia-Torres
Community District 8: MS 131, MS 174
Co-Coordinator: Sally Ceritelli and
Greta Ratjen, MS 131

On-site Teacher-Consultant: Laura Schwartzberg
Community District 8: PS 36, PS 100, PS 101, PS 119
Co-Coordinator: Rosemarie Trippodo, PS 119

On-site Teacher-Consultant: Felicia George
Community District 8: PS 71, PS 140
Co-Coordinator: Elaine Avidon, ETN

On-site Teacher-Consultant: Julie Conason
Community District 10: MS 391, MS 399, TAPCO
Co-Coordinator: Felicia George and Maura Gouck,
NYCWP

On-site Teacher-Consultant: Nancy Mintz
Community District 10: Jonas Bronck Academy,
Bronx Dance Academy, D10 social studies
teachers
Co-Coordinator: Alan Stein, NYCWP

Brooklyn:

On-site Teacher-Consultant: Diane Giorgi
Canarsie HS
Co-Coordinator: Evelyn Sheehan, NYCWP

On-site Teacher-Consultant: Lucie Harris
Maxwell Vocational HS
Co-Coordinator: Matthew Wildman, Bushwick HS
Luke Janka, Brooklyn College Academy

Chancellor's District:

On-site Teacher-Consultant: Lona Jack-Vilmar
850 Grand Street Campus
Co-Coordinator: Angie Pruitt, Brooklyn HS District

On-site Teacher-Consultant: Lona Jack-Vilmar
Wadleigh HS
Co-Coordinator: Linda Farrell, NYCWP
Sonja Johnson, Gompers HS

On-site Teacher-Consultants: Margaret Fiore,
Linda Farrell
George Washington Educational Campus
Co-Coordinator: Margaret Fiore, Linda Farrell
and Julie Conason, NYCWP

Manhattan:

On-site Teacher-Consultant: Suzannah Raphael-
Thompson
Graphic Communication Arts HS
Co-Coordinator: David Grodsky, Middle College HS

On-site IS 143
Co-Coordinator: Kerry MacNeil, Roseann Bayer

Queens:

On-site Teacher-Consultant: Debi Freeman
William Cullen Bryant HS
Co-Coordinator: Ramariette Cabrera, Susan Stone,
Bryant HS

On-site Teacher-Consultant: Diane Giorgi
Newtown HS
Co-Coordinator: Teresa Sullivan, John Bowne HS
Debi Freeman, NYCWP

On-site Teacher-Consultant: Ed Osterman
Queens Gateway to Health Sciences
Secondary School
Co-Coordinator: Antonio Jacobs, Queens Gateway
Technical Assistance: Peggy Maslow,
Franklin K. Lane, HS

ACKNOWLEDGING NEW COORDINATORS

The NYCWP continues to provide inservice seminars to teachers in schools throughout the metropolitan area. During the 2001-02 school year, many of our new colleagues played important roles in the design and facilitation of NYCWP inservice seminars. Some of these teachers were 2001 Summer Invitational Fellows whereas others have been inservice participants themselves.

We want to acknowledge and thank the many first-time coordinators who helped the NYCWP support teachers this year: **Roseann Bayer, Ramariette Cabrera, Sally Ceritelli, Maria Fisher, Luke Janka, Antonio Jacobs, Jeremy Kaplan, Kerry MacNeil, Peggy Maslow, Greta Ratjen, Susan Stone, and Rosemarie Trippodo.** We also want to welcome back **Maura Gouck!** The Project is eager to nurture new coordinators; we need your classroom expertise and fresh vision. We hope that all of these teachers will continue to serve as coordinators in the

PRESENTING OUR WORK LOCALLY

In January 2002 the NYCWP held its fifth annual Teacher-to-Teacher conference at Lehman College. More than 200 teachers from our various inservice seminars attended. Colleagues from around the city shared approaches to writing and learning that have been successful with students. There were workshops on poetry, creating children's books, independent reading, film, mapping, journals in science, cooperative learning, working with historical documents, teaching Shakespeare, the writing of memoir, writing and science, the gallery walk as an introductory activity for the study of a unit, and ways to use computers to support online discussions among students about literature.

Cheers and thanks to our many presenters:

Laura Adamo-Martinez (Montclair State College); Migdalia Albarran-Torres (Progress HS); Paul Allison and Carol Tureski (International HS at LaGuardia Community College); Fred Arcoleo (HS of Law and Public Service); Felicia Bray (University Heights HS); Magdalen Castillo (HS for Health Careers and Science); Susan Clarke (Lehman HS); Linda Farrell, Margaret Fiore and Barbara Martz (NYCWP); Maria Fisher (Brooklyn College Academy); David Johnson (Martin Van Buren HS); Bruce Knight, Alysoun Roach and Mary Ruane (Bryant HS); Ann Kornfeld (Newcomers HS); Meg Krause (TAPCO); Becky Krieg (HS of Law and Public Service); Donna Mehle (Vanguard HS); Gina Moss (Bronx Coalition Community HS for Technology); Grace Raffaele (Institute for Collaborative Education); Greta Ratjen (IS 131); Rodolfo Santos (HS of International Business and Finance); G. Matthew Temme (Evander Childs HS); Rosemarie Trippodo (PS 100); Dr. Axel Q. Ward (Cascades Center for Teaching and Learning).

BRYANT HIGH SCHOOL HOSTS "READ ALOUD"

Under the leadership of teacher-consultant **Debi Freeman**, English teacher **Alysoun Roach** and the school librarians, Bryant HS in Queens held its second annual "Read Aloud." Author Mel Glenn was the guest presenter and speaker. Prior to retiring from Lincoln HS, Mel participated in the NYCWP's inservice program when Debi was an on-site consultant. Seventeen readers and about 90 students attended the "Read Aloud." Mel read poems from his works, answered questions, and inspired everyone to think about the writer in all of us. Mel signed copies of his latest book, *Split Image*, during a reception for readers immediately following the "Read Aloud."

Looking Both Ways

This spring *Looking Both Ways*, the collaboration between the NYCWP and The City University of New York, held its third year of Saturday seminars under the leadership of NYCWP Director **Marcie Wolfe**, founding director **Sondra Perl**, **Bonne August** (Kingsborough Community College), **George Otte** (CUNY), and **Stuart Cochran** (CUNY). Once again, teams of high school and college composition teachers coordinated the seminars. Among these coordinators were **Paul Allison** (International HS at LaGuardia Community College in Queens), **Georgia Scurletis** (Edward R. Murrow HS in Brooklyn), **Carmen Kynard** (Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn), **Andrea Swenson** (East Side Community HS in Manhattan), and **Julie Mann** (Newcomers HS in Queens). **Alan Stein** (NYCWP) and **Halima Toure** (Hostos Community College in the Bronx) co-led a special seminar for returning participants focused on multiple ways to assess student work at the high school and college levels.

Annual Administrators' Breakfast

The Writing Project hosts an annual breakfast for administrators to explain the scope of the Project and to address issues that challenge educators and influence teaching and learning in today's schools. These breakfasts include presentations by teams of teachers and Writing Project staff and discussion in small groups. We held our annual breakfast on March 15th, an event in which principals and assistant principals heard presentations by **Laura Schwartzberg**, **Cora Hiebinger** of Evander Childs HS, and **Ramariette Cabrera** of Bryant HS.

Leadership Forums

In conjunction with our inservice seminars and on-site consulting, the Writing Project collaborated with **Anthony Conelli**, ILS Director of Leadership Initiatives, and **Elaine Avidon**, ILS Co-Director of the Elementary Teachers Network, to sustain and extend the work of the Project in Bronx elementary and middle schools. The Project initiated a Systemic Schools Leadership Group in four District 8 schools. This group included the principals, other administrators, and teachers. Teacher-consultants **Laura Schwartzberg**, **Linda Garcia-Torres** and **Felicia George** designed and facilitated these meetings with Elaine and Anthony. Since February 2000, Elaine and Anthony have coordinated a District 8 Principal's Group, which met several times during the year. The purpose of the group has been to advance administrative support for the work of the Writing Project in District 8 schools and to build the capacity of principals as instructional leaders.

Workshops for Staff Developers

Workshops are typically designed by Writing Project staff and school personnel and are structured as a series. NYCWP Director **Linette Moorman** collaborated with **Suzanne Libfeld**, Director of the New York City Mathematics Project (NYCMP), to lead a series of workshops for the curriculum specialists of the BASIS superintendent's office. NYCWP teacher-consultants **Debi Freeman** and **Lucie Harris** and NYCMP teacher-consultant **Ann Cola** facilitated in the design and conduct of these workshops. Linette and teacher-consultant **Nancy Mintz** also coordinated a series of workshops for staff developers in Community School District 12.

PRESENTING
OUR WORK NATIONALLY

NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT

Each year the NWP hosts several major meetings that bring together Project directors and teacher-consultants from around the country. Several of our colleagues presented at the NWP's Annual Meeting in November. Below is a list of the presentations:

Developing Students' Academic Writing:

Weaving Academic Essays
from Multiple Sources.

Diane Georgi and **Linette Moorman** drew a large audience of NWP directors and teachers to initiate a compelling conversation about supporting struggling writers in the current high-stakes testing environment. By asking the audience to examine the work of a high school student as he moved from note-taking through three drafts of an essay, they explored issues of language, correctness and voice in writing.

Working with New Teachers

Nancy Mintz participated on a panel with people from the Coastal Georgia and Washington DC Writing Projects to consider this critical issue.

We're Here, We're Queer,
You're Reading Us Already:

Gay and Lesbian Texts in the Classroom.

Nick D'Alessandro, **Melanie Hammer**, and **Ed Osterman** conducted a workshop in which NWP members read and responded to a selection of fiction

and nonfiction that might be used with students and colleagues to explore both what is unique and universal in such literature.

NYCWP's 2001 Inquiry with Technology:
A Presentation

For the first time, the NWP held a two-day series of meetings on technology in which representatives from sites around the country exchanged experiences and shared the work they have been doing. **Paul Allison** and **Ed Osterman**, who have been named as our technology liaisons to the NWP, presented some of the work NYCWP teachers have done in our advanced summer seminars in technology these past two years. Paul is currently serving on the NWP's advisory committee for technology liaisons and will attend a meeting in July in California to plan how the tech liaisons can serve their own sites as well as contribute to the national network.

At the Spring 2002 National Writing Project Conference, held annually in Washington DC, teacher consultants **Debra Freeman** and **Julie Conason** were able to meet with legislative assistants from the New York area to create awareness of the work of the NWP and the NYCWP as well as the roles they play in supporting students and teachers both locally and nationally. Julie and Long Island Writing Project Director **Melanie Hammer** had the pleasure of meeting and posing for pictures with Senator Hilary Rodham Clinton!

At the annual Urban Sites conference—held this April in Savannah, Georgia—NWP directors and teacher-consultants from urban areas across the country met

to address issues of mutual concern and to share their knowledge and expertise. This year teacher-consultant **Laura Schwartzberg** conducted a workshop, "Writing Fiction in Fourth Grade to Support Student Achievement." Laura shared a unit of work that immersed children in authentic language and literature experiences – and at the same time prepared them for high-stakes tests. NYCWP Co-Director **Linette Moorman** and Associate Director **Nancy Mintz** also attended. Nancy is a member of the NWP's Urban Sites Leadership Team.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

NCTE hosted its annual November conference in Baltimore this year. Here are some of the ideas and approaches that our NYCWP colleagues presented:

Partners in Practice: Strengthening Student
Literacy Through Teacher Collaboration.

Three pairs of teachers and NYCWP teacher-consultants shared the classroom work that they developed together as well as the ways in which the new teachers challenged the veterans to revisit and reconsider their purposes and pedagogy. The teams included **Jennifer Vatalaro** of PS 100 and **Laura Schwartzberg** (presenting poetry work they did with second graders), **Anna Paraga** of MS 391 and **Julie Conason** (presenting their work on book talks with English language learners), and **Matthew Wildman** of Bushwick HS and **Nick D'Alessandro** (discussing the ways they integrated literacy work into high school social studies teaching). **Ed Osterman** served as reactor/responder for the session.

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NEW YORK CITY WRITING PROJECT



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